

Ten years of marine natural products research at Rhodes University

Davies-Coleman MT, Beukes DR

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Marine invertebrates, **algae** and microorganisms produce a plethora of structurally unique and biologically active secondary metabolites. The ecological roles of these natural products, although not completely understood, range from chemical defence against predation to intra-specific cues for larval settlement. Surprisingly, a number of these metabolites have also shown potential as new medicines for the treatment of a variety of diseases including **cancer**. The natural products chemistry of southern Africa's unique marine flora and fauna is relatively unknown and this review provides an overview of the contribution made by the marine natural products research group at Rhodes University to the isolation, identification and synthesis of biologically active natural products from southern African marine microorganisms, **algae**, sponges, ascidians, soft corals and molluscs.